

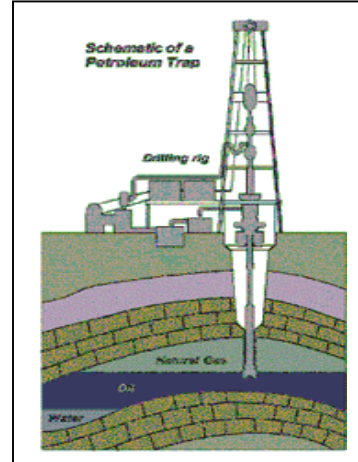
DMME Fact Sheet

Natural Gas and Oil in Virginia

Natural Gas, also known as **methane**, is a colorless, odorless, clean-burning **fossil fuel**. It is a non-renewable resource.

Fossil Fuels formed millions of years ago when plants and animals died and their decomposed remains were deposited in mud on the seafloor. Over time, these remains were covered by more sediment and buried deep in the earth. As a result of high heat and pressure, the organic materials transformed into natural gas and oil (**hydrocarbons**).

In **Virginia**, wells are drilled thousands of feet deep to extract the gas and oil. Once the well is drilled, the gas is sent through pipelines to homes, offices, and factories to be used for heating, appliances and electricity production.

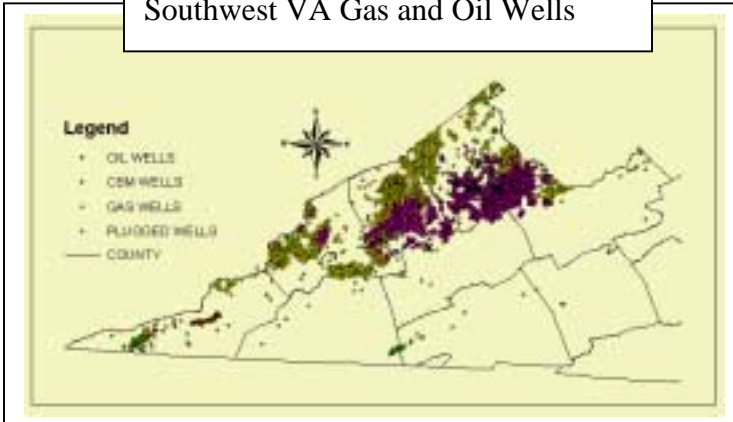


The first commercial gas well in Virginia was drilled in 1931 near Bristol. Over 5,000 wells have been drilled throughout the state, mainly in Southwest Virginia.

Virginia produced **80.1 billion cubic feet** of gas in 2003. It takes approximately 89 thousand cubic feet of gas to heat an average home for one year. That's enough gas to heat about 900,000 homes.

The majority (about 75%) of the gas produced in Virginia is associated with coal seams (**Coalbed methane**). The remaining 25% is **Conventional gas**, which migrates from the organic source and accumulates in a porous rock (see above diagram). There are about **20 Oil wells** in Lee County producing around 20,000 barrels of oil per year.

Southwest VA Gas and Oil Wells



GAS PRODUCTION BY COUNTY

